



# What have the Greens done for Brighton & Hove?



Photo: Charlotte Mac Pherson



End of term report  
of the UK's first  
Green-led local authority

**2011 – 2015**

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# 1. Introduction

In May 2011, following the election of 23 Green councillors, Brighton & Hove became the UK's first Green-led principal local authority. During the last four years, in spite of being a minority administration and against a backdrop of unprecedented year-on-year cuts in the government's revenue support grant, we have achieved a huge amount for the city to be proud of. Under our leadership Brighton & Hove is a safer, healthier place with the economy booming and record visitor numbers.

We fully or partially delivered on over 85% of our 195 manifesto pledges from 2011. These committed us to tackling inequality, involving residents and delivering sustainable development to make Brighton & Hove the greenest city in the UK. This report highlights the many achievements of the 2011 – 2015 Brighton & Hove Green Administration.

We believe we have helped make Brighton & Hove a better place for residents and visitors alike, with a fairer and more sustainable economy, a more vibrant culture and a more accessible and improved environment. We have also been effective in minimising the impact of severe government funding cuts while bringing in over £95 million in external funding for specific projects. Some of these projects will be delivered during the next four years, ensuring a legacy of ongoing improvement.

External recognition of Brighton & Hove as, among other things, the first One Planet City, the 2014 CIVITAS European City of the Year for Sustainable Transport and part of the UK's first new UN Biosphere Reserve in over 40 years, should leave no one in any doubt about our ambition and our ability to deliver green solutions to the challenges that we face.

If there ever was one, the age of 'heroic leadership' is certainly over. Now is a time of collaboration and co-operation. Our achievements for the city have only been possible thanks to the hard work of many people including all the Green councillors, thousands of public service workers inside and outside of the council, business partners, third sector partners and residents active in their communities.

There is still much work to be done, but as the many independent awards and accreditations show – we have delivered on our promises and four years on are leading a city and a council which are stronger and better than ever.

Jason Kitcat  
Leader of Brighton & Hove City Council (2012-2015)

## 2. Awards & commendations

During the 2011 to 2015 Brighton & Hove City Council, under the Green Party leadership, received numerous awards and commendations for the successful and often innovative work we have carried out. Enormous credit for this is due to teams of committed, hard-working and effective council staff, while much is also due to the policy decisions, dedication and vision of our councillor team.

### Communities & equalities

- **Top local authority in UK for supporting lesbian, gay and bisexual(LGB) staff and supporting the LGB community** according to Stonewall, January 2013 & 2015 ([PR](#)).

### Fairness, transparency & democracy

- **World Green Building Council's Government Leadership Awards** - honourable mention in the for our planning guidance which highlights opportunities to grow food in buildings, such as on rooftops, balconies and walls. In November 2013, we were given ([PR](#))
- **Council leader Jason Kitcat won Judges Special Award** for contribution to local government from Local Government Information Unit, March 2015.
- **Centre for Public Scrutiny Award**, June 2014.
- **Living Wage employer accreditation**, April 2013.

### Environment & sustainability

- **World's first accredited One Planet City**, awarded by Bioregional.
- **UK's first UN Biosphere reserve for 40 years**, for city, and its down land environs – also, first in UK to include a city, June 2014.
- **Sustainable Food City Award** from Soil Association, Brighton & Hove, one of four cities, the first in the UK to be awarded this status. March 2015.
- **Civic Trust Award for The Level regeneration programme** as an

outstanding contribution to the environment and the community, March 2015.

- **Green Flag Award for the Level**, joining six other city parks, from Keep Britain Tidy, July 2014.
- **Soil Association Food for Life Silver Award** for catering throughout the City Council, March 2015
- **Promotion of Lepidoptera Conservation Award** for outstanding work in creating 15 butterfly havens across the city, November 2014.

### Transport

- **European City of the Year for Sustainable Transport** awarded by CIVITAS, September 2014 (We were also runner-up in 2012 and 2013). ([PR](#))
- **Smarter Travel Award , 'Most Improved Journey to Work'** for the Lewes Road Improvements Scheme, February 2015.
- **National Transport Awards**, highly commended for Lewes Road sustainable transport scheme, October 2014.
- **Two Safer Parking Awards from British Parking Association**, for making our council-run car parks at Regency Square & Trafalgar Street safer. October 2013 ([PR](#)) .
- **Least car dependent city outside of London** according to the Campaign for Better Transport, September 2012
- **Best practice for cycling** according to the national cycling campaign CTC. April 2014.

## Housing

- **100% of Council homes meet Decent Homes Standard**, March 2014

## Business, employment & tourism

- **Driving Growth Award** from the Local Government Chronicle who cited the Greater Brighton Investment Programme and our oversight of a high-growth, dynamic economy generating new private sector jobs at a faster rate than anywhere in England. ([Web-link](#))
- **UK's most popular seaside resort** according to Office of National Statistics, May 2014 ([Info](#))
- **Open Market won best regeneration, best community involvement and best tourism/leisure project** in the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors South East Awards, February 2015
- **Open Market shortlisted for the best mixed-use development** at the Placemaking Awards.

## Culture & sport

- **Major Partner Museum Status awarded to Royal Pavilion & Museums Trust** by Arts Council England, July 2014
- **Film-friendly City** status granted by Creative England, April 2014

## Children & young people

- **National Award for Best Playwork Team**, won by council's Playbus Team, March 2015
- **Best GCSE results ever**, with pass rates rising when national rates were falling, in 2013
- **All school meals meeting the Soil Association's Silver Standard**, November 2014
- **Top local authority for tackling homophobia & biphobia in schools**, according to Stonewall, July 2014
- **UK's first Apple Distinguished School** for closing the educational 'gap' at Hove Park School for their major technology innovation project equipping pupils & staff with ipads.

## 3. Communities and equalities



*Brighton Pride Festival*

**The Greens have worked to implement policies and support projects and partnerships which promote community safety, equalities, fairness and protection for the most vulnerable. Brighton & Hove benefits from an incredibly diverse and busy community and voluntary sector. Sadly, government cuts and the soaring numbers of people in need are having an impact on charities and community groups while reducing funding for much of their work. We recognise and celebrate the immense contribution that such groups make to our city, and where possible have worked with them to plan effective and innovative ways to support residents.**

### **Funding for voluntary organisations**

We significantly protected the funding we grant to community groups and voluntary organisations in the city at a time when many local councils have dramatically cut back on such funding.

### **Keeping libraries open**

At a time when libraries, as important community hubs, are closing up and down the country, all our twelve libraries have remained open and we even opened two new community libraries. In May 2014 we opened one in Woodingdean linked to a GP surgery. In August 2014, we opened a second in Mile Oak in conjunction with PACA (Portlsade Aldridge Community Academy).

We also introduced free WiFi and internet access and support in all our libraries, particularly important for residents affected by the government's changes to the welfare system. ([PR](#))

### **Community banking partnership**

In September 2014 we launched Moneyworks, a community banking partnership funded by the council, aiming to tackle financial exclusion, offering a safer alternative to legal and illegal loan sharks. We invested £100,000 in the project which involves Brighton & Hove Citizens Advice Bureau, Brighton & Hove City Council, Money Advice & Community Support, East Sussex Credit Union, Whitehawk Inn, The Bridge, The Hangleton & Knoll Project, Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Project and Toynbee Hall.

## **Free financial advice**

By August 2013 we had helped more than 370 council tenants access more than £350,000 in unclaimed benefits and support as part of our free financial advice service.

## **Ending promotion of payday lenders**

We ended advertising by payday lenders on council-owned billboards in the city through adjusting the contract requirements.

## **Helping troubled families**

We set up the Integrated Team for Families in 2011 to work with troubled families. This brought significant improvements to the lives, futures and employment chances of many families across the city. The projected savings to the many agencies involved, among them the council, the NHS, the police and the probation service, are considerable. It is another example of the council working with others to make the best use of public funding.

## **Equality impact assessments**

We've continued to formally scrutinise the impacts that our decisions may have on local communities and social groups, despite the national government declaring these assessments to be unnecessary 'red tape' and making them non-compulsory. ([Report](#))

## **Carers' card**

In 2011 we introduced the Carers' Card, which entitles carers, who provide regular unpaid help or support to people – often relatives, friends or neighbours – who have a disability, mental health problem or long-term illness, to discounts and support across the city. ([PR](#), [Info](#))

## **More accessible taxis**

In 2014 we guaranteed that there will be more taxis in the city accessible to disabled people and supported disability awareness training for Brighton & Hove taxi drivers. ([PR](#))

## **The Level park sensory garden and accessible facilities**

We ensured that, among the new facilities in the re-developed Level park, was a sensory garden and fully accessible toilets, including a 'Changing Places' facility with enough space for disabled people and carers.

## **Ending Blue badge parking fraud**

In December 2014 we won government funding to help us clampdown on blue badge fraud, ensuring disabled parking spaces are kept available for those who need them. ([PR](#))

## **Safe in the City**

We combined the skills of the council's community safety team with neighbourhood policing teams in a 'Safe in the City' unit to better address crime and anti-social behaviour. In 2013 we were awarded EU funding to help communities and families tackle addiction and the anti-social behaviour it can cause. ([PR](#)) By 2014 fewer people were ending up in hospital because of alcohol use. More drug users were being treated and crimes against young people had fallen for three successive years. ([PR](#))

## **Expanded Cumulative Impact Zones**

We expanded the council's 'Cumulative Impact Zone' and 'Special Stress Areas', which restrict the granting of new alcohol licences to shops and supermarkets in areas where alcohol sales already create problems.

## **Challenging domestic violence and sexual abuse**

In January 2014, working with the Police and local domestic violence (DV) charity RISE, we established a domestic abuse drop-in surgery session every Wednesday morning for anyone looking for advice about their situation ([PR](#)). Also, working with RISE, we helped set up the city's first service for men experiencing domestic abuse to deal with the one in five local DV incidents reported from men. ([PR](#)) We helped secure £5,000 business donation to the Survivors Network for victims of sexual abuse.

## **Women's Champions**

After taking office we established 'Women's Champions' - leading councillors whose role is to promote women's equality issues across the council's services and within the council among staff. The champions helped set up a women's workers' forum to support women employees in the council - an important development given that women make up more than half of the council's employees. In August 2013 the councillor women's champions and others were involved in the Lose the Lads Mags campaign, which saw the Co-op withdraw these magazines from their stores. ([PR](#))

## **Independent review into experience of Black Minority and Ethnic staff**

After concerns were raised by Black Minority and Ethnic (BME) council employees we commissioned a major independent review into their experiences. New mechanisms are being put in place to ensure the council provides an inclusive and equitable working environment for all staff, including improvements to the council's management information and staff training.

## **Supporting lesbian, gay, bi-sexual & transgender (LGBT) people**

In January 2015 we were named as the top local authority in the country by Stonewall for supporting LGB staff and supporting the LGB community ([PR](#)). In July 2014 we called for an end to discrimination against gay blood donors in a motion to Full Council. ([PR](#)). We won a commitment from the Sussex Police Authority to continue funding a specialist LGBT hate crime officer. In November 2011 we gave a stop-gap grant to the LGBT Switchboard, which was facing financial problems. ([PR](#))

## **Tackling homophobia and homophobic bullying in schools**

Through joint work with the local Allsorts youth project, we introduced a range of measures to help tackle discriminatory attitudes towards pupils who identify as lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer or intersex, and equipped teachers to support them. The work has been nationally recognised by equality group Stonewall, which named Brighton & Hove City Council the top local council in the country for tackling homophobia, biphobia and homophobic bullying in schools in 2012 and again in 2014. ([PR](#))

## **Tackling Trans discrimination and hate crime**

We supported the first Trans Pride and accepted the recommendations of the ground-breaking work of the cross-party Trans Scrutiny Panel which in May 2013 examined the needs and



discrimination faced by people who identify as 'trans'. Recommendations included awareness training for councillors, council staff and health service workers to ensure trans people are able to access council services without discrimination. The council's Community Safety Team put in place ways to monitor transphobic hate crime more accurately. In June 2014 we were granted a Centre for Public Scrutiny Award for this work ([PR](#)).

### **Discount leisure card for people in need**

We introduced a 40% discount leisure card for residents in receipt of key benefits, subsidising participation on activities such as swimming, squash, badminton and table tennis, as well as access to fitness suites at the six council-run leisure centres.

### **Traveller Strategy**

We introduced a new Traveller Strategy and a good behaviour agreement with visiting Traveller groups.

### **New permanent managed site for Travellers with local connections to the city**

We took significant steps to ensure that Travellers with local connections to the city have stable managed options for locating, which is crucial for improving the education of Traveller children and for the wider health and employment prospects of these families. We have used government funding, secured by the previous Conservative administration, ring-fenced for this purpose, to build a new permanent managed site. This will help to relieve pressure on the existing transit site so reducing the likelihood of unauthorised and problematic encampments in parks, sports grounds, sensitive open spaces and roadsides in the immediate neighbourhood and elsewhere in the city.

### **Tackling food poverty**

In October 2014 we agreed to incorporate tackling food poverty into our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment report on the health and wellbeing needs of Brighton & Hove residents. In May 2014, we agreed to collect items for food banks at council offices. We also give financial support to Fair Share, individual food banks and run food banks through some of our children's centre.

### **Extending on-line access**

In December 2013 we granted £50,000 to local community organisations to help vulnerable residents get online - particularly as the government's new welfare system is online-only.

### **City of Sanctuary**

In March 2015 we supported calls for Brighton & Hove to be recognised as a 'City of Sanctuary', to work with partners to provide support and safe refuge for refugees and asylum seekers ([PR](#)).

### **Resisting the bedroom tax & benefit cap**

In May 2013, in response to the government's bedroom tax, we introduced a no-evictions policy in cases where: a) All other avenues have been explored; b) Transfer is the only option but there are no suitable properties to transfer to; c) It is possible to clearly identify that arrears are solely due to the under-occupancy penalty.

In February 2013 we called on the government to scrap the benefit cap in a successful motion to council.

## **Resisting austerity and protecting council services**

We consistently presented the case against the government's austerity agenda and their unprecedented and increasing year-on-year cuts to our funding through the Revenue Support Grant. We explained to fellow councillors and the wider public the severe impact such cuts would have on the Council budget and our ability to deliver vital services. To offset this we repeatedly called for above 2% increases in Council Tax and for referenda, required by law, in order to present this option to the city. Unfortunately, as a minority administration, we were out-voted, by the combined opposition parties, on every occasion.

## 4. Fairness, transparency & democracy



*Brighton Town Hall*

**When elected, we promised more openness and democracy. We set about using information technology, participatory techniques and various reforms to make decision making more accessible and inclusive. We began with arguably the most important and difficult decisions – those on the city council budget.**

### **Budget planning transparency and engagement**

We began publishing annual budget proposals months earlier than previous administrations and with more detail so that they could be scrutinised by everyone, ahead of time, making this transparent to all – other political parties, citizens and the media. We set up an online budget simulator for residents to explore the council budget and let us know their priorities. We held regular meetings during the budget setting process with other political parties, unions and community representatives. ([report](#))

### **Cabinet system replaced by committees**

We replaced the highly centralised cabinet system, which excluded councillors from opposition parties from many important discussions and decisions, with a more open committee system. Each new committee, responsible for large areas of council work, was composed of councillors from different parties in proportion to their overall numbers across the council, ensuring that every party had a voice and could influence decisions.

### **Open government**

We signed up to the 'Open Government License', which ensures that data and content on the council's public website is available for re-use ([Report](#) and [PR](#)). We amended Council rules and protocols to allow re-use of meeting webcasts, to enable use of mobile devices in meetings and

to permit audio recordings of meetings. We published increasing amounts of open data, in open formats, including map data for council services and assets. ([Info](#))

### **Free public WiFi**

In March 2015, as part of the **Super Connected Cities Programme**, we launched free public WiFi at most City Council buildings, including: Brighton, Hove & Portslade Town Halls, Kings House, Bartholomew House, all children centres, youth centres and council-run museums, swimming pools and leisure centres in addition to all libraries ([PR](#)). Additional free public WiFi hotspots will continue to be rolled out across the city as part of a concession agreed with BT for the use of streetlamps.

### **Neighbourhood Governance pilots**

We introduced pilots for Neighbourhood Governance schemes, which support communities to take local decisions with local budgets. The two pilots – in the areas of Hollingdean & Stanmer, Whitehawk and Bristol Estate – are progressing well and the forums are currently exploring options to become self-funding.

### **Living Wage**

We supported the roll-out of the Living Wage across the city. In 2011 we introduced a minimum Living Wage (currently £7.85 of an hour) for all council employees and for all staff delivering services through council contracts. All the council's Home Care contractors have now adopted the Living Wage. As a result we have won formal Living Wage Foundation accreditation. ([PR](#))

### **Reducing senior management spend**

We reduced the pay of the Chief Executive officer, and the number of senior management posts, so the council now spends less on senior management than it has in a decade.

### **Reducing ratio between the highest and lowest paid**

We brought down the ratio between the highest and lowest paid council staff to within a ratio 10:1 by significantly reducing the Chief Executive's salary and increasing the lowest pay grades.

### **Equal pay and allowances for council staff**

We dealt with historic and previously unresolved issues on equal pay that we inherited from previous Labour and Conservative administrations. We aimed to ensure fairness for all staff from care workers and social workers to gardeners and waste operatives and to fulfill our legal and moral obligations to ensure staff doing jobs that are predominantly done by women were not paid any less than staff doing jobs done predominantly by men.

The formation of Brighton & Hove City Council in 1997, from the merger of Brighton Borough, Hove Borough and parts of East Sussex County councils, had created complex arrangement for staff pay and allowances which were judged, in some instances, to be inconsistent and unfair. Basic pay issues were eventually reformed, but significant discrepancies in allowances remained unresolved. This left the council at risk of prosecution and claims of sexual discrimination if they continued to be unresolved. By the time Greens took office in 2011 hundreds of claims were already in process with tribunals.

We researched how other councils had handled similar issues and explored many options before beginning negotiations with trade union representatives in early 2013. During a ninety-

day staff consultation period every employee received a detailed pack and had one-to-one meetings with their managers. About 90% of staff would see little or no change to their total pay, while those who were affected mostly gained. Those who would see a reduction or 'detriment' in their allowances were offered lump sum payments, within legal and financially affordable constraints, to compensate for their detriment. Many Cityclean staff were affected by such detriments and their GMB union called for industrial action and a better offer.

The compensation that was eventually agreed was approximately three times any worker's annual detriment, e.g. someone losing between £1,001 and £1,250 a year in allowances would receive £3,550 in one-off compensation.

At the end of this process we achieved a pay and allowances system which is now clear and fair for all staff. Resolving these pay anomalies was controversial and a difficult process for many staff and our minority administration, as well as for many residents with the disruption that industrial action caused. However it was essential that we did resolve it for the long term wellbeing of the council, for council employees and for everyone in the city that it serves.

### **Council leader recognised for contribution to local government**

In March 2015, Council Leader Jason Kitcat was awarded the Judges Special Award for his contribution to local government by the Local Government Information Unit (LGiU) in their national CCCLA/Councillor awards.

## 5. Environment, sustainability & animal protection



*Revitalised Level Park*

**During 2011-15 Brighton & Hove made great strides towards becoming greener. In 2012 we were declared the world's first One Planet City by meeting a set of sustainability criteria, set by Bioregional. The programme is an internationally recognised initiative based on ten simple principles to make sustainable living easy and affordable for organisations and individuals, so saving energy and money. We worked hard to put the council and the city on a more sustainable footing, with the financial benefits this brings, improving the quality of our local environment and reducing our negative impacts on the world beyond.**

### **The Level park restoration**

We restored the Level park in central Brighton with over £2m from the Heritage Lottery Fund and The Big Lottery Fund and additional funding from Sport England and the Veolia Environmental Trust. The project transformed this large, decaying urban green space with new gardens, a new water feature, a new children's playground, new public toilets, a cycle café, better lighting and furniture, a new high quality skate park, and more green space. By successfully securing outside funding, the council only needed to contribute £250,000 out of the total £3m invested, saving council tax payers' money

### **Biosphere reserve**

We worked with the local Biosphere Partnership with the South Downs National Park and Lewes District Council, to win a bid to UNESCO for the city, and its down land environs, to become a Biosphere Reserve. Biosphere Reserves promote a balanced relationship between people and nature. They are world-class natural environments. We were the first locality in the UK to be awarded biosphere status for 40 years and the first in this country to include a city.

## **Bio-diversity in public spaces**

In January 2013 we agreed a new Biodiversity Action Plan, which set out the priorities for conservation in the city. ([Report](#) and [PR](#)). We worked to make the most of our public spaces as places for both people and wildlife, including more diverse and sustainable planting such as perennials, wildflowers, and bee and butterfly banks. We reduced mowing on number of the city's wider road-side verges to allow wild flowers and grasses to grow, creating green corridors to support biodiversity. Over the winter of 2013/14, council rangers worked with volunteers to plant 90,000 plants in areas that used to be regularly mown. We developed new management plans for Wild Park and Whitehawk Hill to ensure better conservation of rare wildlife habitats. In November 2014 we won an award for our butterfly havens ([PR](#))

## **Expanding public access to the South Downs**

We dedicated 1.326 acres of the city's publicly owned downland as public open access land under the Countryside Rights of Way Act.

## **Preston Park Rockery**

We completed the restoration of the Preston Park Rockery, including refurbishing the leaking pond. This was a community effort with volunteers, school children and Community Payback workers all helping out. New features include a wildflower chalk bank and improved access to the woodland area; a pond shallows area has been added to encourage amphibians.

## **Stanmer Park regeneration**

In partnership with the South Downs National Park Authority we won Heritage Lottery Funding to develop Stanmer Park's potential as a gateway to the National Park.

## **Protecting the natural environment**

We continued to protect our rare elm trees, care for protected species and our natural environment through the planning process

## **Improved refuse collection service**

We introduced refuse collections on bank holidays outside the Christmas period, so ending the frequent confusion for residents on which day their refuse will be collected - a significant improvement in the service. We set about a redesign of the CityClean refuse and recycling service to improve efficiency, recycling rates and generate new sources of income.

## **Increased recycling options**

We introduced recycling for small electrical items and unused paint, and we are also exploring offering a commercial waste and recycling collection service as part of a redesign of the CityClean service.

## **Communal recycling scheme**

To tackle the previous Conservative administration's trend of falling recycling rates, we took steps to roll out communal recycling bins across 32,000 households in the city centre, finally making recycling as easy as other waste disposal. Following our trial in one ward, which saw recycling rates leap by 70%, and following two years of negotiations and external fundraising, we have begun the full rollout and look forward to its impact. Although there is still much to do

to improve recycling rates in the city, we believe that we have turned this tide. The latest performance figures show a 10% boost in the recycling rates in 6 months.

### **Incentives for recycling**

We worked with communities on an initiative in Brighton's Moulsecomb estate to incentivise household recycling.

### **Seafront anti-litter campaign**

We launched a seafront anti-litter campaign to encourage tourists and visitors to the city to dispose of their rubbish responsibly or take it home.

### **Community composting**

With the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership and numerous community groups, we expanded community composting sites across the city. More than 1,000 households are now reducing their food waste through such schemes, with many able to access free compost in return.

### **Community food growing**

Working with the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership, we supported community food growing in public parks such as Dyke Road Park and Wish Park.

### **Sustainable Food City**

In March 2015 Brighton & Hove became one of four cities to be the first in the UK to be awarded Sustainable Food City status by the Soil Association. We were noted for being the first UK city to incorporate food growing as part of its planning guidelines for new residential developments as well as for the varied and vibrant range of food projects in the city, many led by the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership.

In 2014, we became the first council in the country to introduce higher standards for food procurement including local and healthier food. This has been cited as best practice in advice to London councils and others elsewhere. ([PR](#)) Much of this came out of our 2011 'Food Strategy', which aimed to tackle obesity, support a sustainable food economy and support community food growing schemes. ([Report](#))

### **Allotment strategy**

In February 2014, working with the local allotment federation, we launched a new Allotment Strategy, which set out how to make the most of the allotment plots already available, and a system of discounts for those on lower incomes. ([Info](#)) The strategy also promotes the wider values of allotments: health and well-being, fresh nutritious & affordable local food, social contact, wildlife and biodiversity.

### **Ethical procurement strategy**

We introduced a new ethical procurement strategy to improve minimum standards for the products the council buys in. For example, the World Wildlife Fund has granted us their Gold standard for timber purchasing and the Soil Association has granted us a silver award for our procurement of ingredients for school meals.



## Climate Change Strategy

In November 2011 we supported the introduction of a city-wide Climate Change Strategy, detailing how we might meet our aspirations to reduce our contribution to and mitigate climate change. ([Report](#))

## Supporting development of wind power

We supported the plans for the huge Rampion wind farm off the coast of Brighton & Hove, which will provide 700MW of power – enough for 450,000 homes – due for completion in 2017.

## Solar council buildings

We installed photo-voltaic solar panels on council buildings, including Hove Town Hall and Bartholomew House as part of our plan to reduce energy costs and carbon emissions. We had hoped to be more ambitious, with a major programme of solar panels identifying 40 non-housing council buildings. However this became unaffordable when the government slashed Feed-in Tariffs. We responded to the consultation explaining our concerns and have continued to find other ways to get panels onto council housing and offices whenever possible. ([Link](#))



*Cllr. Liz Wakefield inspecting installation of new solar panels on council homes.*

## Solar council homes

We installed solar panels on 300 council homes in a bid to cut bills and our carbon footprint. ([PR](#))

## Solar Schools

We established a £50k ring-fenced budget to help fund the installation solar panel on council-run schools. New school buildings were prioritised. Thirty panels were installed on Hove Junior School at Holland Road in 2014. Similar schemes are planned at Saltdean Primary School and St Andrew's CE Primary School as part of their building extensions. Several local schools have signed up to the national Solar Schools crowdfunding initiative and run their own solar installations including St Bartholomew's with 39 solar panels and more recently St Luke's primary schools.

## Street lighting refurbishment

In January 2015 we announced plans for a major street lighting refurbishment programme, replacing most of our 26,000 street lights. The proposals involve borrowing from the Green Investment Bank (or another similar source) to fund smarter low energy lights, which make identifying faults much easier, allow for better monitoring of energy use, and enable remote control of lights. This will slash our carbon footprint and our energy costs, helping to recoup the financial outlay. This programme builds on trial installations pioneered on several roads in the city during 2012-2014.

## Reducing the number of council buildings

We have significantly reduced the number of buildings used by the council, cutting council running costs and reducing the council's carbon footprint.

## **Energy efficiency retro-fitting**

Council tenants benefited from a major programme of energy efficiency retro-fitting to council blocks. ([PR](#) and [PR](#))

## **District heating**

We started work on a study for the introduction of two large district heating schemes where energy sourced from industrial settings is circulated within a small district or housing scheme. This offer financial savings which reduce fuel poverty as well as cutting the city's carbon footprint.

## **Water saving toilets**

In April 2014 we installed new water saving toilets in the Royal Pavilion Gardens block ([PR](#)).

## **Warm Homes scheme**

We continue to run our own Warm Homes scheme, which offers some residents, in privately-owned, rented or leased homes, free cavity-wall and loft insulation, as well as advice on saving money on their energy bills. ([PR](#))

## **Green Deal Pioneer Places**

In December 2012, working with others in the city, we won money for the Green Deal Pioneer Places project. This helped householders and businesses improve the energy efficiency of their properties. ([Info](#))

## **No fracking zone**

In January 2013 we declared the city a **no-fracking zone** and supported residents in nearby Balcombe, defending their local environment and our water aquifer from fracking. ([PR](#))

## **Stronger protection for pets in council housing**

In consultation with council tenants, council officers and leading animal protection groups such as the RSPCA and the Dogs Trust, we introduced stronger protection for pets in council housing tenancy agreements. This included a requirement that dogs living in council-owned homes should be micro-chipped. This has encouraged more tenants who own dogs to behave responsibly as their pets are much easier to trace.

## **Opposing badger culls**

In December 2013 we joined the RSPCA in opposing government plans to roll out badger culling across the UK. We called on MPs to support Early Day Motion 661 and we resolved prevent culling from taking place on council-owned land, including council-owned farms on the South Downs.

## 6. Transport



*Innovative new cycle lanes and bus stops along the Lewes Road sustainable transport corridor*

**Investment in sustainable transport is crucial to our local economy and to people's livelihoods, as well as making everyone's day-to-day lives easier, healthier and safer.**

**The 2011 census showed that Brighton & Hove has the highest proportion of people walking to work in the South East, the second-highest proportion travelling to work by bus, minibus or coach and the highest growth rate in cycling to work, outside of London, nearly doubling to 5% between 2001 and 2011. The census also showed a decline in car ownership with 38% of households not owning a car, and more people walking, cycling and using public transport in general. (PR) However, as a growing city in 2011 over 104,000 cars and vans were registered in the city, that's 4,000 more than in 2001, increasing the pressure on limited road space.**

**Since 2011 we have made huge strides investing in sustainable transport, drawing in over £40 million in external funding, making alternatives to car use more safe, practical and attractive, by building a transport system that's fit for a growing city in the twenty-first century.**

### **CIVITAS European City of the Year Award**

**In September 2014 we were awarded CIVITAS European City of the Year for Sustainable Transport for our extensive work across the city. The judges commented that, under the Greens, "Brighton & Hove has made huge strides towards becoming a more sustainable city". We were also runner-up for the CIVITAS award in 2012 and 2013. (PR)**

## **Least car dependent city outside of London**

In 2012 the Campaign for Better Transport named Brighton & Hove the least car dependent city outside of London. ([Link](#))

## **Safer roads**

Government figures for 2013 (most recent available) suggest that, with a 15% reduction in serious injuries in 2013 compared with 2011, our roads are safer since the Greens took office. ([PR](#)). Monitoring of the Phase 1 20mph limit area, introduced in the city centre in April 2013, compared average figures from 2010-2013 with the first year of 20mph. This showed:

- a 17 per cent drop in collisions, down from 318 collisions a year to 264.
- a 12 per cent reduction in casualties from 371 per year to 327.
- a 20 per cent reduction in serious casualties, from 53 to 43.
- no fatal accidents compared with a previous average of one per year. ([PR](#))

## **Air quality improving**

Air quality across much of the city has improved since 2011, with pollution falling at 44 of our 46 monitoring stations in Brighton & Hove. While the improvements are modest we have taken a range of initiatives to help deal with air pollution.

In October 2013, with Brighton & Hove Buses, we won £700k funding from the government's Green Bus fund to enable the retro-fit of 50 buses with filters & catalytic converters to clean up emissions and improve air quality, particularly along busy bus routes in the city centre. ([PR](#))

In October 2014 we launched a scheme to bring 30 low emission minibus taxis to the city's streets, funded by a successful bid to the government's clean vehicle technology fund. ([PR](#))

In January 2015 we launched a Low Emission Zone to tackle stubborn air pollution hotspots in the city centre. All bus services within the LEZ, along North Street and Western Road as far as Palmeira Sq, have to meet new regulations. Because 98% of bus movements in the city pass through the zone, it will help improve air quality across the city. ([PR1](#))

## **Bus use increasing and punctuality improving**

Brighton & Hove residents and visitors continue to make more bus journeys than anywhere in the UK outside of London, with consistent year-on year passenger growth under the Green administration. In 2013/14 46 million bus passenger journeys were made in the city, a 3.6% increase on the previous year which at 44.8 million journeys which was 5% up on the year before that.

Bus services are beyond the remit of the council as they are privately run and their routes are independently controlled however, we worked to make our major arterial roads more bus-friendly with significant Council-led investment in new bus lanes, improved bus stops and upgraded real-time bus information systems.

Bus punctuality also improved with 89.4% 2013-14 of buses running on time in 2013/14 compared to 88% the previous year. ([PR](#))

## **Real Time Bus Information system upgraded**

We invested in a comprehensive upgrade of the Real Time Bus Information system to make it more reliable, accessible and compatible with GPRS and mobile technology, as well as with neighbouring areas and different bus companies. We worked in partnership with bus service providers to ensure that the information customers get at bus stops and online is as accurate as possible and can include all the city's buses. Additional electronic signs were installed at many more bus stops and other locations ([Report](#)) ([PR](#))

## **Free school bus passes**

We struck a new deal for children who qualify for free school bus passes. From September 2013, eligible secondary age pupils received the bus company's smartcard, the Key. This enables them to travel free anywhere on the Brighton & Hove Bus network evenings, weekends and during school holidays (replacing the term-time, school-days only bus passes previously issued.) The arrangement is better for young people and also saves the council money. ([PR](#))

## **More car-sharing through City Car Clubs**

The number of car club vehicles has grown, and in 2015 Brighton & Hove now has the third largest fleet in the UK after London and Edinburgh. ([PR](#)) There are now more than 90 City Car Club vehicles located in designated parking bays across Brighton & Hove which can be reserved by the hour, day or as long as you want.

## **20mph speed limits on residential streets**

In response to concerns about road safety, especially for children and vulnerable adults, we introduced 20mph speed limits in residential streets across most of the city providing the largest contiguous 20mph area in the UK. The scheme has succeeded in reducing average speeds, creating calmer streets making walking and cycling a safer and more attractive option. ([PR](#))

## **Improvements for walking and better street furniture**

We worked on a range of improvements to the Brighton Lanes area, North Street and Preston Street, which are important retail, tourist and leisure areas. This included repaving, simplifying signage and street furniture, and better pedestrian crossings.

Along Lewes Road and Edward Street and around Seven Dials and Brighton Station we removed railings and other clutter and installed benches, trees, planters and pedestrian way-finding maps. We also responded to local residents' concerns by introducing trees and planters along Waterloo Street and Viaduct Road. ([PR](#))

## **Providence Place improved**

In January 2014 we agreed permanent plans to improve Providence Place Gardens, after temporary changes piloted in October 2013. At April 2015, work is ongoing with completion in June 2015. ([PR](#))

## **Lewes Road sustainable transport corridor**

In 2011 we won £4.2m from the government's Local Sustainable Transport Fund to transform the Lewes Road into a sustainable transport corridor with reduced traffic-related NO<sub>2</sub>, particulate and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, improved safety and more efficient use of this key arterial route linking the city centre to four university sites, the football stadium, the South Downs and outlying neighbourhoods of Coldean, Bevendean & Moulescoomb. Improvements included: a new real-time bus information system, better bus shelters and pedestrian crossing, better access to rail stations, pedestrian way-finding maps and re-allocation of road space to incorporate a bus lane and a widened cycle path. The cycle path was re-routed behind innovative floating bus stops to reduce conflict with buses and increase safety. Proposals were supported by nearly two-thirds of 4,200 of those who responded in one of the most extensive consultation exercises ever conducted in the city. We also engaged with residents by offering Personal Travel Planning advice and cycle training in local schools.

Most road works were completed in September 2013. After the first 12 months, monitoring showed a 7% increase in bus journeys, a 14% increase in cycling and a 13% reduction in general motor traffic. Bus journey times and reliability improved and general traffic journey times were not significantly affected, showing only a 1 minute increase for incoming morning traffic. ([info](#)) Additional improvements were made to the Vogue Gyrotory, including new cycle lane, floating bus stop, new traffic signals and complete resurfacing. These were finished in December 2014. ([PR](#)).

### **Awards for Lewes Road and other schemes**

In April 2014, we were cited as an example of best practice by the national cycling campaign CTC. ([PR](#))

In October 2014 we were highly commended at the National Transport awards for our work on the Lewes Road and Seven Dials. ([PR](#))

In February 2015 we won the 'Smarter Travel Awards' Best Journey to work award for the Lewes Road scheme. We were also shortlisted for our work on the JourneyOn travel app ([PR](#)).

Our CIVITAS award as European City of the Year for Sustainable Transport cited Lewes Road along with many other schemes that we initiated

### **Seven Dials junction redesign**

We initiated a major overhaul of the previously dangerous Seven Dials junction, to make it safer and more inviting as a place for visitors and residents. We attracted £300k from central government to help fund the scheme. The improvements have been popular and were cited by CIVITAS and the National Transport awards for the contribution made to sustainable and safer transport.

### **Old Shoreham Road improvements**

In 2011 we won £300k from Sustrans to improve the Old Shoreham Road. Completed in 2013, we had installed state-of-the-art segregated cycle lanes to support safer cycling and new pedestrian facilities, particularly to benefit children travelling to the many schools along that route. Monitoring showed a 30 per cent increase in cycle journeys along the route, with a threefold increase in the proportion of cyclists who regard the route as safe – now around 80 per cent.

The narrowed motor traffic lanes also helped drivers to moderate their speeds, reducing infringements and instances of fines along this 30mph route. Monitoring showed a reduction in average speed from 45mph before the scheme to 30mph afterwards. ([Report](#) and [PR PR 2](#))

### **Edward Street improvements**

In 2012 we were awarded £3.4 million from the government's 'Better Bus Areas' fund to improve bus efficiency and punctuality in the Edward Street, Eastern Road and Valley Gardens areas. This involved adjusting lane widths and the central reservation on Edward St to accommodate a bus lane and cycle lane as well as improved paving and pedestrian crossings.

### **New cycle links to the Downs**

In 2014 we opened new downland off-road cycleways adjacent to Falmer Road, linking Woodingdean with Falmer ([PR](#)) and another adjacent to Ditchling Road. A further cycleway is under construction alongside Warren Road near Woodingdean.

## Seafront Arches reconstruction

In March 2015 we won £9 million investment for seafront arches from the Department for Transport's Highways Maintenance Challenge Fund. This will provide urgent reconstruction of the former West Street Shelter Hall supporting the upper promenade at the junction of the A259 and West Street. ([PR](#))



*Cllr. Ian Davey, inspecting the new seafront arches during construction*

## Valley Gardens improvements

We developed a vision for 'Valley Gardens' to improve the Old Steine and Victoria Gardens areas from St Peter's Church to the seafront. This will create a more pedestrian-friendly and attractive public space while improving bus & cycle lanes, junctions and drainage. ([Report](#) and [PR](#)). In 2014 we won £14m to start work ([PR](#)), the first £8million of which was released in March 2015 for work on Phases 1 & 2 to start by Autumn 2015 ([PR](#)).

In addition to this, in July 2014 we won £895,000 Local Sustainable Transport Fund support from the DfT with a focus on Valley Gardens and the area to the east along Edward St for 2015/16 to provide Personal Travel Planning (PTP), for residents businesses and universities, and cycle training and community maintenance support aimed at adults and business employees.

## Station Gateway project

We led the 'Station Gateway' project, which saw a much-needed revamp of Brighton station and the surrounding area, to make it easier for those using public transport, cycling or walking , leading to a more integrated transport system. We also worked with Southern Railway to get bike parking installed at the front of Brighton train station. ([PR](#))

## Secure cycle parking at five rail stations

We attracted over £1.2million government funding, working with Southern Rail and Network Rail, to provide secure cycle storage and other facilities at five stations across the City. At Brighton Station the country's largest station-based cycle hub was opened in March 2015, providing secure parking for 500 bikes plus a café and maintenance facilities. Similar cycle hubs will follow at Portslade and Hove Stations, with additional improved parking planned for London Road and Moulsecoomb stations.

## Cycle-sharing Scheme

In March 2015 we won 1.16 grant from the Coast to Capital Local Economic Partnership to fund a 'Boris Bikes' style cycle-sharing scheme. This will provide 430 bikes across docking stations at 50 different locations. The scheme will link rail stations with popular visitor attractions as well as important shopping, housing, employment and educational sites. It is anticipated that the full scheme will launch in 2017. In the mean time we have facilitated implementation of a smaller taster scheme during summer 2015 ([PR](#)) ([Web](#))

## Ending waiting list for traders' parking permits

We abolished the 18-month waiting list for traders' parking permits, meaning more traders are able to access the value and flexibility they offer. Those who need to park across the city to service their clients now don't have to queue daily to get a day waiver.

## **Safer car parks**

In October 2013 we won an award from the British Parking Association, for making our council-run car parks safer. As part of our sustainable transport strategy, we are encouraging visitors to park in the multi-storey car parks rather than circle the city's streets waiting for an on-street space. Part of this involves investment in these major car parks to make them safer and easier to use. ([PR](#))

## **Parking improvements**

We introduced the option of paying for parking by phone so that people aren't caught out by having no change. ([Report](#)) ([PR](#)). The council's 2013 Parking Annual Report showed that waiting lists had been halved or eliminated, fewer tickets issued and operation costs reduced on previous years. ([PR](#))

## **Controlled Parking Zones to tackle nuisance parking**

We introduced **Controlled Parking Zones**, where residents have requested them, to tackle parking problems and make it easier for local residents who use cars to park closer to their homes and to tackle nuisance parking.

In 2011/12 we worked with community groups in the Elm Grove area to come up with a long term solution to the problem of pavement-parking on the road. A community-developed solution was rejected in consultation, so the council began to enforce against those driving on the pavements and parking in dangerous places to protect pedestrians. Discussions through the Local Action Team (HEGLAT) are on-going around parking and what form of CPZ might work best for residents ([PR](#))

## **Pavement parking enforcement**

In 2014 we began a pavement parking enforcement campaign other hotspots identified by parents, residents and businesses to make school runs safer. ([PR](#)) We also enforced against dangerous pavement parking in response to community complaints and with the support of visually impaired and blind advocates ([PR](#))

## **Match day parking scheme**

We worked with B&H Albion to develop a match day parking scheme for the areas surrounding the stadium to limit nuisance parking. ([Report](#) and [PR](#))

## **Road permit scheme to reduce disruption**

We agreed a road permit scheme to help limit disruption caused by road works, keeping traffic moving and reducing congestion and air pollution. The proposal has gone to the Secretary of State for approval, and should be in place by Spring 2015. ([PR](#))

## **Intelligent traffic management system**

In March 2015 we won £1.83m bid for hi-tech transport improvements from the Local Transport Body of the Coast to Capital LEP. This will reduce congestion, improve road safety and enhance the management of traffic incidents. ([PR](#))

## **Eco driving course**

We introduced an 'eco driving' course for residents to show how they could save money and fuel on their journeys. ([PR](#))



## **Motorcycles in bus lanes**

In 2013 we started a trial to allow allowing motorcycles in bus lanes on major routes into the city centre with a view to seeing how this affects road safety. ([Report](#) and [PR](#))

## **LTP4 – The new Local Transport Plan**

In April 2015 new LTP4 Transport Plan for the city was approved, setting out a framework and priorities for maintenance and capital investment until 2018/19. It is proposed to give priority to a number of existing, approved schemes, including: Brighton Station Gateway, 20mph speed limits, Seafront arches and the Valley Gardens project, as well as continued investment in road safety schemes and pedestrian crossings. ([PR](#))

## 7. Housing



*New council housing on Wellington Road*

**Successive governments' insistence on the 'Right to Buy' policy has meant there are fewer council homes for families on low incomes. This has been all the more damaging in Brighton & Hove, where land is in short supply and where 20% of former council homes built for those on low incomes are now owned by landlords renting them out privately at full rental rates. Furthermore, cuts in housing subsidies have put many new housing association homes beyond the pocket of those in greatest housing need. In the absence of a coherent government social housing programme, and with limited space in the city, we focused on making better use of the properties and development sites we already have.**

**We also worked with housing associations, private developers and with government to develop the City Plan and ensure that brown-field sites will be prioritised for the provision of the future housing that the city needs while protecting green space wherever possible.**

### **Bringing empty homes back into use**

We brought 491 empty private and 400 empty council owned homes back into use, most of these through the Seaside Community Homes Agency. We won £3.1m of Homes and Communities Agency funding to work with property owners to bring empty properties back into use ([PR](#)). We also leased an empty council building on Preston Road to Southern Housing for them to provide 30 new homes.

## **New affordable homes**

A total of 639 homes were completed from 2011 to 2015. We oversaw the delivery of 389 affordable homes (as part of wider residential and mixed developments), with a further 681 affordable homes, including more than 200 new council homes, in the development pipeline. We built 15 new council homes at Ainsworth House, on Wellington Road, the first new council homes in Brighton & Hove in a generation. ([Report](#)).

The Open Market scheme, on London Road, created 87 homes for rent and shared ownership. The Edge housing scheme, Pankhurst Avenue, created 95 homes for rent and shared ownership. We gave planning approval for the last New England Quarter site (53 homes for shared ownership), Gala Bingo site (35 homes for rent), Park House Hove (30 homes for shared ownership); 1 Manor Road, Whitehawk (18 homes for rent and shared ownership); St James Street (29 homes for shared ownership).

## **Extra affordable housing leased**

We leased 391 extra properties from the private sector at affordable rents to provide homes for homeless people.

## **Decent homes**

In March 2014 we hit our target of 100% of council homes meeting the Decent homes standard.

## **Reducing management costs**

We reduced housing management costs to increase the budget for building new homes and improving existing stock with new roofs, lifts and energy-saving measures.

## **Refurbished housing for older people**

We initiated the refurbishing of the two housing schemes where older people had to share bathrooms (Sanders House in Hove and Evelyn Court in Portslade). The work is expected to be completed by middle of 2015/16 ([PR](#)) In December 2013 we got approval to build 45 flats for older and vulnerable people. Building work started in autumn 2014.

## **New extra-care flats for older people**

We were awarded £2.5 million by the Homes and Communities Agency to help fund a £9 million council scheme of 45 extra-care flats for older people on the Brooke Meade site as part of a citywide council estate regeneration programme. More than 50 new council homes will be the next stage in the programme.

## **Rapid re-letting of council homes**

The average time it takes to re-let an empty council home is now just over two weeks – the lowest in many years and one of the best turn-round times in the UK.

## **Developments for future housing need**

We kick-started developments that have been languishing, including Circus Street ([PR](#)), the Royal Sussex County Hospital, and Preston Barracks ([PR](#)) which are now back on track to regenerate brownfield sites, and provide new homes, facilities and employment space.

## **No-eviction policy for Bedroom Tax victims**

We won all-party agreement not to evict council tenants solely on the grounds of rent arrears caused by the government's Bedroom Tax.

## **Disabled adaptations**

We adapted 3,580 homes to meet the needs of disabled council and private tenants.

## **Reviving dormant development schemes**

Development sites that had been languishing were revived by the Green Administration. For example, plans to regenerate the old Circus Street market site – with up to 200 new homes, new offices and a new library – are under way. We also moved forward with plans for the redevelopment of Preston Barracks.

## **HMO licensing scheme**

We introduced and then extended a licensing scheme to improve safety and public health in smaller houses in multiple occupation (HMOs). Landlords letting a property for sharing by three or more unrelated people, must bring it up to an agreed standard. This helped create mixed communities while raising standards of housing. By April 2014, 1,500 licenses had been applied for, with many undertaking fire safety works.

## **Tenant involvement**

In 2013 we set up the Tenant Scrutiny Panel to provide a platform for tenants to better examine the work and services the council offers. The panel's recommendations on the use of plain and on customer services were accepted by the council. ([Report](#) and [PR](#)). We engaged a more diverse group of tenants in the council's tenant involvement structure for improving and monitoring services through for example providing crèche services during the City Assembly for the first time.

## **Housing Strategy**

We developed a new housing strategy for the city. For the first time the strategy will include a family housing strategy

## **Ending council tax discount on empty and second homes**

We ended the council tax discount on second homes, and homes that have been empty for extended periods of time, to encourage owners to bring them back into use. ([Report](#)) ([Info](#))

## **Extra funding for homelessness services**

We earmarked an extra £1 million for homelessness services per year to help the increasing number of people who found themselves on the streets as national government welfare cuts started to bite. We also maintained a high level of funding for supported housing.

## **Energy efficiency grants for people in need**

We ran schemes to help vulnerable people make their homes warmer, healthier and more energy efficient. All private tenants or homeowners who are over the age of 60, or who have a disability or long-term health conditions or who are a low-income family, can apply for free new boilers, draught-proofing, insulation or heating system upgrades.

## **Energy efficiency retro-fitting council housing**

Council tenants benefitted from a major programme of energy efficiency retro-fitting to council blocks which, where possible, included solar panels and new heating systems. As a result, for the first time in living memory, communal heating bills in some council blocks fell.

## **‘Warm Homes Healthy People’ programme**

In partnership with the NHS, we ran the ‘Warm Homes Healthy People’ programme. This included a range of services aimed at reducing the city’s annual winter death toll and the serious effects on health, which can be caused by living in cold homes. We offered advice on benefits, energy tariffs and insulation grants/discounts.

## **Eco-homes**

We continued support for the Eco Open Houses programme where individual open up their homes to share their experience of installing measures which reduce ecological impact. Many exemplary homes have been build or been retrofitted, inspiring others to have a go.

## **Growing food**

In November 2013, we were given an honourable mention in the World Green Building Council’s Government Leadership Awards for our planning guidance which highlights opportunities to grow food on buildings, such as on rooftops, balconies and walls. ([PR](#))

## **Saving council tenants money through free advice**

Free advice to council tenants helped nearly 400 people access £350,000 in unclaimed benefits and savings on household bills.

## **Traveller sites**

We made provision for a permanent traveller site, with building work due to start in 2015 ([PR](#)). We considered short-term toleration on less sensitive sites to reduce potential disruption at more sensitive sites. We introduced a good behaviour agreement with visiting Traveller groups. ([PR](#))

## **Traveller Strategy**

We introduced a new Traveller Strategy, replacing the sparse and outdated one from the previous administration. ([Report](#))

## **City Plan for future housing and development**

The City Plan is our blueprint for the city to 2030 which seeks to balance the need for 24,000 new homes with our rich heritage of historic buildings and open space. In November 2014 Part 1 of our City Plan was agreed, showing how we plan to use land in the city. We set up a cross-party working group and consulted extensively on new proposals, including:

- a) New measures to secure more affordable housing in developments
- b) An emphasis on sustainable travel arrangements for residents in new developments
- c) A guarantee that should the private area of land known as 'Toad's Hole Valley' be developed by its owners, it will be done to the highest sustainability standards, providing a balance of homes, work space, business facilities, schooling and publicly accessible open space. (Around 1,500 jobs, plus training and apprenticeship opportunities, will be created during the lifetime of the Toad's Hole Valley regeneration project.)
- d) More stringent sustainability standards and enhanced protection for the South Downs National Park. ([PR](#))

## **Working with our neighbours on housing**

We worked closely with neighbouring councils and have been key in the Coastal West Sussex Strategic Planning Board, which brings together eight neighbouring councils, to work on sorting out the sub-regional housing problems.

## 8. Business, regeneration, employment & tourism



*Circus Street regeneration*

**Our local economy has weathered the national economic storm, created under Labour and made worse by the coalition government, relatively well but not without difficulty. Across the country, unemployment, especially among young people, has increased, there are more empty shops, and many people's spending power has gone down. However, measures to develop and diversify key industries in Brighton & Hove have helped protect local jobs and businesses. In fact we have seen 9,000 new jobs created and have scored third in the UK for small and medium sized business start-ups. Brighton & Hove's position in the creative, digital, educational and tourism industries is robust and the Green-led council has provided support for these and other industries wherever possible, including through linking with neighbouring authorities to develop the Greater Brighton area.**

### **Economic strategy**

We've worked with the local Economic Partnership to refresh the city's economic strategy designed to encourage high value, low carbon jobs.

## **Brighton for Business**

We worked with local enterprises to launch 'Brighton for Business', an initiative to encourage local, national and international companies to invest in the city.

## **Driving (sustainable) Growth with City Deal**

In March 2014 we successfully secured funding through the government's 'City Deal' scheme which will provide more resources for the city and more freedom from Whitehall to help us support local businesses and create jobs in the Greater Brighton area. This includes the city area and surrounding towns such as Lewes, Newhaven, Shoreham and Worthing. Overall this is expected to create 8,500 jobs and £173m investment over the medium term. Green council leader Jason Kitcat led the negotiations with government on behalf of the five councils making up the Greater Brighton city region covered by the deal. In 2014 Brighton & Hove was named the third best city in the UK for growth of small and medium-sized businesses ([PR](#)).

In 2015 we won the Driving Growth Award from the Local Government Chronicle who cited the Greater Brighton Investment Programme and our oversight of a high-growth, dynamic economy generating new private sector jobs at a faster rate than anywhere in England. Judges commented: *"The combination of clear measurable ambition and tangible projects shows that this impressive programme is working. Creating a new city region is very ambitious. Bringing six very different councils, some of which would not previously identify themselves as part of a Greater Brighton, shows that it can be achieved. Putting universities and businesses at the centre of the programme shows that skills and innovation are central to its success."* ([Web-link](#))

## **UK's most popular seaside resort**

Figures show that tourism has consistently increased year on year under the Greens with estimated visitor numbers increasing from 8 million (2011) to 11 million (2014) ([PR](#)). In May 2014 the Office of National Statistics rated Brighton as the UK's most popular seaside resort and the eighth most popular visitor destination, with 409,000 stays recorded by hotels. In 2013 Brighton & Hove was also the most popular seaside resort, with 50,000 more visitor stays than in the previous year ([Info](#)) The Brighton Festival and Fringe Festival, each May, attracted bigger audiences than ever. Events such as the Rugby World Cup in 2015 and conference bookings in the eco-refurbished Brighton Centre mean visitor numbers are likely to continue to rise.

## **Regenerating London Road**

We successfully applied for Brighton's London Road to become a Mary Portas pilot project to help regenerate this important local shopping street. ([info](#)). With funding from the European 'Living Cities' programme we set about improving Providence Place as a key walking route linking London Road with Brighton Station and the New England Quarter.

In December 2012 we added the **Co-op building on London Road** to the local list, meaning that the new development scheme, converting it into student accommodation, needed to keep the historic façade. ([PR](#))

## **New Open Market**

In July 2014, following our intervention to get it back on track, the new **Open Market** finally reopened for business, with 45 tenants offering fresh, locally sourced food and goods, as well as a variety of arts, crafts, services and garden goods. It is managed by the Brighton Open Market Community Interest Company (CIC), as a social enterprise for the benefit of the local community, with a board including representatives from market traders, the council, The Ethical Property Company, and The Hyde Group ("Hyde") who developed the site. ([PR](#)) ([Web](#))

In February 2015 the Open Market won best regeneration, best community involvement and best tourism/leisure project in the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors South East Awards. It was shortlisted for the best mixed-use development at the Place-making Awards.

### **Major new developments**

In July 2014 we were awarded £17.4m under the Government Growth Deal, for Circus Street, Preston Barracks and an Advanced Engineering Centre ([PR](#))

### **One Hove Park**

We approved One Hove Park, a visionary housing development and the final part of regenerating the sites around Brighton Station

### **Circus Street regeneration**

In September 2014 planning was agreed for the £100m regeneration proposal for the site of the **Circus Street** municipal fruit and veg market, to become a sustainable mixed-use scheme and ‘innovation quarter’ providing a new library and teaching space for the University of Brighton, employment space, including managed workspace for the creative industries, residential units, student accommodation, ancillary retail and a community and professional dance space run by South East Dance. Creating 400 jobs and injecting £200m into the city’s economy over 10 years. Cathedral have formed a joint venture with McLaren Property to deliver the site and have opened a temporary cultural and community use in the building including a community DIY cycle maintenance and other up-cycling and renovation projects. A community room is available for use by groups and a large exhibition space used by the Brighton Festival, University of Brighton, and Photo-biennial, among others. ([Web](#))

### **Preston Barracks regeneration**

Since early 2013, we worked in partnership with the University of Brighton and Cathedral Group Ltd to unlock the redevelopment of the council-owned Preston Barracks site. In July 2014 the partners exchanged contracts and have been undertaking preparatory work. Good progress has been made and it is anticipated that initial conditions will be satisfied early in 2015, following which the design development. ([Web](#))

### **Edward Street regeneration**

In September 2013 we brought forward a development brief for the Edward Street area to guide new development on the old AMEX office site and surrounding area. ([PR](#))

### **i360 and seafront regeneration**

In June 2014 building work started on the i360 viewing tower. This major investment in an iconic new tourist attraction followed agreement by councillors to take out a £36million government loan (from the Public Works Loans Board), to pass on to developers to kick-start the project. i360 will bring jobs and visitors to the city while earning B&H City Council around £1.1 million per annum for facilitating the loan ([Link](#)). Proceeds will also be used to invest in the seafront and local community initiatives. The 170 metre viewing tower is being built by the team who created the London Eye, the most visited paid-for attraction in the UK. In late 2015 the tower will rise up on the Brighton seafront and it will open to the public in summer 2016. The scheme has received strong support from local businesses and the community ([Info](#)).



## **£6.6 million from developer contributions**

£6.6 million in contributions from developers associated with schemes across the city were ploughed into improving open spaces, providing apprenticeships, helping build schools and improving public realm and transport infrastructure through the 'Section 106' planning gain scheme.

## **Supporting construction apprenticeships, training and jobs**

We helped unlock funding and development sites to ensure that apprenticeships, skills training and jobs were linked to key developments contracts. With construction firms such as Denne, we helped bring essential work experience for apprentices linked to City College. We provided 61 jobs and supported 431 local residents through the European Interreg construction programme for apprentices to learn basic construction skills. Our Local Employment Scheme delivered a free recruitment service to help development schemes provide employment and training for local people.

## **Seafront Arches reconstruction**

Since 2012 we have begun significant works to rebuild the derelict seafront arches so that they can be brought back into use. The first section was completed in 2014, following a £7 million investment, and includes 10 new business premises on the seafront and new public toilets. ([PR](#) and [PR](#)). In March 2015 we won £9million additional government funding (through Coast to Capital LEP) to renovate the seafront arches at the bottom of West St, including reconstruction of Shelter Hall.

## **Volks Railway restoration**

In June 2014 we won a first round Heritage Lottery Fund bid of £96,000 to develop proposals to restore and upgrade the Volks Railway ([PR](#)). More work is being done on the proposals for the second round. ([PR](#))

## **Waterfront Project**

In 2014 we won cross-party support for the **Waterfront Project**, which will see the rebuilding of a new Brighton Centre on the Black Rock site, and new shopping and housing developments on an improved seafront. ([PR](#))

## **Sand Sculpture at Black Rock**

In November 2012 we agreed a temporary use for the Black Rock site for the Brighton Sand Sculpture Festival, while a more permanent development is being sought. ([PR](#))

## **Tourism Advisory Board**

In November 2013 we established a Tourism Advisory Board to ensure that council policy meets the needs of the city's tourism businesses. ([PR](#))

## **Visitor Information Points & City Champions**

In April 2014 we launched the new city champions greeter scheme to welcome visitors to the city. The event coincided with the opening of a new Visitor Information Point at the Brighton Centre, part of a more accessible network of 14 visitor information points across the city. ([PR](#)) ([PR](#)).

## **Rugby World Cup 2015**

In May 2013 we were announced as a host city for the Rugby World Cup 2015 with two matches to be held at the AMEX Community Stadium. The right to host these matches had been won despite an intensively competitive national process between cities. ([PR](#))

## **Eco-tourism strategy**

We introduced an eco-tourism strategy to attract more green-minded tourists to the city. ([Link](#))

## **Protecting community assets**

In May 2014, we got a pub added to the local list of Assets of Community Value, giving the local community group the opportunity to bid for the property when it goes on sale. ([PR](#))

## **Keeping local control of local planning issues**

In July 2014 we confirmed a local rule exempting certain areas of the city from the government's 'permitted development rights' that allows conversions from office to residential space without permission. ([PR](#)).

## **Planning for home grown food**

In November 2013, we were given an honourable mention in the World Green Building Council's Government Leadership Awards for our planning guidance which highlights opportunities to grow food in buildings, such as on rooftops, balconies and walls. ([PR](#))

## **Bringing empty premises back into use**

We ran a business rate discount scheme to encourage smaller businesses to bring empty shops and offices back into productive use. ([PR](#))

## **Supermarket Levy**

In June 2014 we signed up the council to the nationwide campaign for councils to be given the powers to introduce a supermarket levy to redistribute supermarkets' profits to smaller local businesses. ([PR](#))

## **Support for creative industries**

Working with Wired Sussex, we successfully bid for £650,000 of EU funding to support the creative industries in Brighton & Hove. This was used creatively to bring empty properties back into use.

## **Ultra-fast broadband**

We successfully lobbied government for additional ultra-fast broadband infrastructure funding. This meant faster internet speeds for individuals and businesses and free outdoor WiFi for residents and visitors. From March 2015, most council buildings offered free WiFi.

## **Digital Exchange**

In September 2014 we agreed to support a unique and innovative digital exchange at New England House, to offer ultra-fast and low cost broadband to the city's small digital and creative businesses. This initiative, in partnership with Wired Sussex, was backed with government investment ([PR](#))

## **Sustainable Business Partnership**

We supported the East Sussex Sustainable Business Partnership which helps local business make significant financial savings in energy and carbon. Last year over 80 businesses benefited from the advice service saving £53,673 along with savings in waste (4 tonnes), Water (6,051 cubic metres; and, energy, including Green Tariff (554,316 kWh).

## **Eco Technology Show**

We supported the city's Eco Technology Shows in 2013 and 2014. In 2012 the show attracted over 100 environmental companies exhibiting, 800 firms attending, and 3000 members of the public. ([PR](#))

## **Able and Willing**

We financially-supported Able and Willing, the council's Supported Employer, (formerly Castleham Industries) who employ 20 staff, 90% of whom have a disability. With the investment from the council, they have been able to buy new equipment and continue supporting people with disabilities into work. ([Info](#))

## **One stop shop for apprenticeships and jobs**

We helped set up a 'one stop shop' for young people in the city centre, where they could receive help with job searches, CVs, application letters, and details of training courses and apprenticeships.

We offered more apprenticeships and training opportunities to young people through partnership working between the council and City College. This included 14 young people who worked on the restoration of The Level ([PR](#)), with 23 in total in place as of January 2014 ([PR](#)).

## **Living Wage Commission**

We introduced a Living Wage for all council-employed staff, which, at £8.75 (Mar 2015) is higher than the minimum wage and takes into account local living costs. We established a Living Wage Commission to investigate the feasibility of the Living Wage across other employers in the city. Brighton & Hove Chamber of Commerce now runs a citywide Living Wage Campaign, supported by the council. At April 2015, more than 200 private and charity sector companies had signed up as Living Wage employers. A quarter of the Living Wage employers in the UK are located in Brighton & Hove. ([PR](#))

## 9. Culture & Sports

**Brighton & Hove is major regional cultural centre, hosting around 350 major public events per year, including the Brighton Festival and Brighton Fringe as England's biggest Arts Festival, along with numerous sporting events such as the Brighton Marathon and London to Brighton bike ride. Such events are a vital part of our offer as the most popular seaside resort in the UK as well as to our residents. Since 2011 the Green administration has drawn in vital investment for our iconic cultural buildings, supported new developments and continued to raise the profile of the city for our contribution to the arts and to sport.**

### **Royal Pavilion Estate investment**

In 2014, we won £5.8m from the Arts Council to regenerate the Royal Pavilion Estate ([PR](#))

### **Major Partner Museum Status**

In July 2014, the Royal Pavilion and Museums Trust won Major Partner Museum Status, and £2m from the Arts Council to improve our museums and support apprenticeships. ([PR](#)) ([PR](#))

### **Film Friendly City**

In April 2014, we were granted Film Friendly City status by Creative England after our work to attract crews to film here, bringing money into the local economy and supporting local jobs. ([PR](#))

### **Libraries home delivery service**

As well as protecting all our libraries and creating two new ones, we replaced the ageing and inaccessible mobile library vehicle with a new tailored home delivery service, saving money and providing a better more accessible service for those who need it. 500 people have been identified for this service and they now have access to up to 500,000 books via laptops and tablets taken to their homes by volunteers and a dedicated member of staff, who will guide them through the online book ordering process. ([Report](#))

### **Discount leisure card**

The concessionary card, introduced in 2013, to enable those on certain benefits to access our leisure centres has proved very successful. Almost 1,300 people had signed up and made 34,000 visits to the council's leisure centres in the first year of the scheme. ([PR](#) and [PR](#)).

### **Withdean Sports Complex investment**

In March 2014 we opened the newly revamped Withdean Sports Complex after a £3m investment programme. The improvements included a new running track, climbing wall, and other facilities. ([PR](#))

### **Saltdean Lido CIC**

We came to an arrangement with the leaseholder of Saltdean Lido, and brought it back into council ownership. In 2014 we agreed that the Saltdean Lido CIC will run the venue. ([PR](#))

### **Green gym licensing scheme**

In January 2014, with the support of many fitness training companies, we introduced a voluntary licensing scheme for companies using public green spaces in order to ensure that they contribute to their upkeep. ([PR](#))

### **Tour of Britain**

In 2014 we facilitated Brighton & Hove's hosting a portion of the Tour of Britain cycle race ([PR](#))

### **Rugby World Cup**

We supported the successful bid to bring the 2015 Rugby World Cup, with two matches planned at the Amex Stadium in September 2015

### **Brighton Marathon**

We continued to support the Brighton Marathon along with other large participatory sporting events. In 2015 the marathon had around 10,000 participants and over 100,000 spectators, requiring considerable management support in the form of road closures.

## 10. Health & Social Care



**Local councils play a huge role in delivering social care services. But budgets and capacity are under greater pressure than ever before as the country's ageing population develops more complex needs. By 2020 the rising costs of social care are set to wipe out councils' ability to provide almost all other services. A nationwide review of how Britain runs and pays for health and care in the long term is urgently needed.**

### **Protected the 'eligibility criteria' for social care**

Unlike many other councils, we protected the 'eligibility criteria' for providing social care, ensuring that care continues to be available for those who need it.

### **Health & Wellbeing Board system leadership**

We reformed the statutory Health & Wellbeing Board from being just something 'we had to do' to a powerful joint decision-making and accountability board for all health and social care decisions in the city. The Adult Care & Health Committee was abolished and all its powers merged into the Board. The Board also changed its composition to ensure an equal number of voting members from the council and health sides, with the council leader now becoming chair. Board meetings were supplemented with an officer board, Chief Executive's group and a wide-reaching Health & Wellbeing Partnership. Together this work is providing landmark leadership to integrate services and budgets in the city in a joined up way.

### **Carers' card**

We introduced a carers' card which entitles carers to discounts and support across the city.

## **Becoming an Age-Friendly City**

We held regular meetings with the Older People's Council to discuss issues that affect older people, and we agreed to work towards becoming a World Health Organisation Age-Friendly City.

## **Database of services provided by community groups**

We funded an online database, 'It's Local Actually', which allows residents in the city to find out about services in the city provided by community-based groups.

## **Simplified process for adapting vulnerable people's homes**

Supporting people in need of care, and who wish to remain independent, is better for their quality of life and saves money. We simplified the process for adapting vulnerable people's homes to make them more suited to their needs, and combined it with the work of the council's housing department in this area.

## **'City Summit' consultation with service users**

We consulted on all changes to services with users, families, carers and staff. For example, we held a 'City Summit' for current and potential future Adult Care service users. We continually reviewed how we carried out our consultations so that they could offer convenience and accessibility to as many people as possible.

## **Reducing child obesity rates**

Child obesity levels are now declining in the city, in contrast to national trends.

## **Sensible on alcohol**

Our licensing policy restrained the growth of retail alcohol outlets. Over one hundred outlets signed up to the 'Sensible on Strength' campaign to not stock beer & cider with more than 6% alcohol.

## **Active travel**

We sought to improve health outcomes by promoting more walking and cycling, through schemes like Healthwalks, better cycling & walking environments and the Personalised Travel Advice programme. E.g. Cycling along the Lewes Road sustainable transport corridor increased by 13% between 2012 and 2013.

## **New City Hospital**

We supported plans for a brand new £400 million Royal Sussex County Hospital which will bring top health facilities for residents. The first time in 100 years that a new hospital will have been built in the city:

## 11. Children & young people



**All children and young people deserve the best possible start in life and some need more help than others. The need to invest in them couldn't be clearer. Yet young people bore much of the brunt of the coalition's cuts nationally.**

**In Brighton & Hove we sought to protect services for young people and children. We are proud of our progress in this area while acknowledging there are still many children in poverty in our city and many suffering abuse and neglect.**

**The 2011-15 government's education policy had a profound effect on our ability to provide school places. Instead of allowing councils to set up new schools, government ministers pushed 'free schools' and 'academies', publicly funded but run by interest groups and businesses. Most councils found that free schools and academies are not able to provide the school places needed by communities. Working within these constraints, we acted to expand the number of school places and in order to establish a new secondary school in the future, we worked with the University of Brighton as a trusted local partner.**

### **Best ever GCSE results**

Education in Brighton & Hove – for so long a major concern to parents – is finally improving. The 2013 GCSE results were the best ever, with pass rates rising at a time when national rates were falling. We proudly applaud the city's schools and staff for this achievement.

### **Supported legal challenge to 2012 GCSE gradings**

We backed the nationwide legal challenge to the GCSE grading fiasco in 2012.



## **Sixth Form and college results**

Our Sixth Form and college results were also very good. 80% of schools now are good or outstanding as judged by the school inspectorate Ofsted.

## **Expanding successful schools**

In partnership with the University of Brighton, we set in motion plans for a new secondary school for the city. Although, due to government policy, this will be within the 'free-school' framework, we believe that this partnership approach with a reputable local provider offers the best way of ensuring local oversight and high standards.

We have worked to expand successful local primary schools. We bought the former Hove Police Station and adapted it for use as a school site by West Hove Junior School. We also gave the go-ahead for the extension of buildings at Saltdean and St Andrew's Primary Schools to accommodate 398 extra pupils.

## **Local funding and democratic oversight**

We campaigned for the reinstatement of local funding and democratic oversight of school places. In September 2014 following our anti-academy campaigning, the results of a ballot of parents of children at Hove Park School meant that the governors chose not to proceed with academy status. ([PR](#))

## **Encouraging free schools to opt in**

Where free schools have been approved by the government's Department for Education to open in the city, we encouraged them to opt into our general admissions system, nationally-agreed pay and conditions for staff, and council-provided services.

## **Better school meals**

In November 2014 we improved catering contracts so that all school meals met the Soil Association's Silver standard, meaning it now includes more local, seasonal, organic, ethical and healthy food for children in our schools. ([PR](#)). In November 2013, we provided a free school meal to every primary school child, over the course of National School Meals Week. ([PR](#)). We were the first place in Sussex to be awarded the Soil Association's Bronze Food for Life Catering Mark, for food served in nursery, primary and special schools within the city.

## **Supporting technology innovation**

We helped Hove Park School fund and install their major technology innovation project which uses Apple iPads for all staff and pupils along with AppleTV devices in classrooms. This project has led to significant educational improvements for all children, and most significantly and markedly for the school's pupils from the most deprived backgrounds. This work, in closing the educational 'gap', has been recognised with the UK's first Apple Distinguished School status.

## **Key card passes for free bus travel**

We provided key card passes to children entitled to free school bus travel, mainly those on free school meals. This meant they benefited from free travel around the city at evenings and weekends, not just to and from school.

## **Early years provision**

Up to March 2015 we kept all Children's Centres open across the city with no loss of services, in contrast to many councils and despite government cuts in this area. All our council early years

provision is judged outstanding by Ofsted. In March 2015 the City Council was commended for the highest level of take up, in the South-East, of early learning places for two-year-olds by low income families. 83% compared to south-east av. is 63% and national average of 62%. In March 2015 BHCC's children's services team were congratulated for achieving 83% of low-income families taking up entitlement to free early learning for two-year-olds.

### **Supporting play**

We protected funding for the Play Bus and Play Service, such a vital lifeline for many children and families, and we enabled local groups to open their streets up for play. In March 2015 the council's Playbus Team won the National Award for Best Playwork Team 2015.

### **Saving Bright Start nursery**

We protected the council-run Bright Start nursery in central Brighton from closure and worked with a nursery advisory group, including representatives from parents and staff to look at its longer term sustainability.

### **Protecting the youth service**

We have one of the few remaining council-run youth services in the country, which we have protected from government cuts. We maintained support to the voluntary sector youth services, now working together as the Youth Collective.

### **Participatory Budgeting for young people in Moulsecoomb**

We supported a programme of Participatory Budgeting, involving young people in Moulsecoomb deciding how to allocate almost £20,000 towards youth projects in the area.

### **Youth Employability Service**

Our Youth Employability Service ('YES') had its best ever results in helping young people back into work, employment or training, with 463 being helped into employment or training in 2012-13. This made Brighton & Hove one of the most improved areas in England with only 6.6% of 16-18 year olds not in employment, education or training – the lowest figure since 2004 when this measure was first calculated.

### **Tackling homophobic & biphobic bullying**

Stonewall named Brighton & Hove City Council the top local council in the country for tackling homophobia, biphobia and homophobic bullying in schools in 2012 and again in 2014. ([PR](#))

### **Apprenticeships for looked-after children**

As part of wider work supporting apprenticeships, we introduced ring-fenced council apprenticeships for our looked-after children.

### **Special Educational Needs strategy**

We produced a new strategy for children with Special Educational Needs and improved services for young people with autism and behavioural difficulties, who are growing in number.

### **Increased investment for adoption and fostering**

A new recruitment and awareness drive helped raise the profile of adoption and fostering in the city. We increased the budget and invested in extra staff to find more in-house foster carers. Numbers of young people coming into care are falling and we are placing a renewed emphasis

on early help for young people and parents. We promoted fostering at many external and internal events.

### **Call for stronger action on FGM**

In March 2015 we passed a full Council motion, with cross-party support, calling for stronger government action to protect girls from FGM (female genital mutilation).



Brighton & Hove's  
Green Group of Councillors  
2011-15

Promoted by

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